

What is claimed is:

- 1           1.     A system for providing definitions, comprising:  
2               a server receiving a phrase to be defined, determining one or more  
3 documents each containing at least one definition, and matching the phrase to at  
4 least one of the definitions; and  
5               a user interface presenting one or more definitions for the phrase.
- 1           2.     The system of claim 1, wherein receiving the phrase to be defined,  
2 determining one or more documents each containing at least one definition,  
3 matching the phrase to at least one of the definitions, and presenting one or more  
4 definitions for the phrase are performed substantially in real time, batch mode, or  
5 a combination thereof.
- 1           3.     The system of claim 1, wherein the documents are Web pages.
- 1           4.     The system of claim 1, wherein the determining includes  
2 conducting a query on a search engine.
- 1           5.     The system of claim 4, wherein the determining includes searching  
2 for documents that include a predetermined term in a predetermined field.
- 1           6.     The system of claim 5, wherein the predetermined term includes  
2 one of a glossary, definition, and dictionary.
- 1           7.     The system of claim 5, wherein the predetermined field is a title  
2 field.
- 1           8.     The system of claim 1, wherein the matching includes determining  
2 the presence of the phrase in one or more determined documents.
- 1           9.     The system of claim 8, wherein the matching includes determining  
2 the absence of the phrase in one or more determined documents.

- 1           10.    The system of claim 8, wherein determining the presence of the  
2 phrase further includes determining an exact match of the phrase.
- 1           11.    The system of claim 8, wherein the matching comprises modifying  
2 the phrase.
- 1           12.    The system of claim 8, wherein modifying the phrase comprises  
2 determining a canonical form of the phrase.
- 1           13.    The system of claim 1, wherein the matching further comprises  
2 retrieving an associated definition of the phrase.
- 1           14.    The system of claim 1, wherein presenting one or more definitions  
2 includes ranking the definitions.
- 1           15.    The system of claim 14, wherein the ranking is based at least in  
2 part on the documents.
- 1           16.    The system of claim 15, wherein the ranking is based at least in  
2 part on the PageRank of the documents associated with the definitions.
- 1           17.    The system of claim 1, wherein the presenting further includes  
2 processing the definitions.
- 1           18.    The system of claim 1, wherein presenting definitions for the  
2 phrase includes presenting a substantially most common capitalization of the  
3 phrase.
- 1           19.    The system of claim 18, further comprising presenting less  
2 common forms of the phrase.
- 1           20.    The system of claim 1, further comprising determining  
2 superstrings of the phrase present in the documents.

1           21.     The system of claim 20, further comprising presenting at least  
2     some of the determined superstrings.

1           22.     The system of claim 21, wherein at least one of the presented  
2     superstrings is presented as one of a related phrase and a suggested query.

1           23.     A method for providing definitions, comprising:  
2             receiving a phrase to be defined;  
3             determining one or more documents each containing at least one  
4     definition;  
5             matching the phrase to at least one of the definitions; and  
6             presenting one or more definitions for the phrase.

1           24.     The method of claim 23, wherein receiving the phrase to be  
2     defined, determining one or more documents each containing at least one  
3     definition, matching the phrase to at least one of the definitions, and presenting  
4     one or more definitions for the phrase are performed substantially in real time,  
5     batch mode, or a combination thereof.

1           25.     The method of claim 23, wherein the documents are Web pages.

1           26.     The method of claim 23, wherein the determining includes  
2     conducting a query on a search engine.

1           27.     The method of claim 23, wherein the determining includes  
2     searching for documents that include a predetermined term in a predetermined  
3     field.

1           28.     The method of claim 27, wherein the predetermined term includes  
2     one of a glossary, definition, and dictionary.

1           29.     The method of claim 27, wherein the predetermined field is a title  
2     field.

- 1           30.    The method of claim 23, wherein the matching includes  
2   determining the presence of the phrase in one or more determined documents.
- 1           31.    The method of claim 30, wherein the matching includes  
2   determining the absence of the phrase in one or more determined documents.
- 1           32.    The method of claim 30, wherein determining the presence of the  
2   phrase further includes determining an exact match of the phrase.
- 1           33.    The method of claim 30, wherein the matching comprises  
2   modifying the phrase.
- 1           34.    The method of claim 30, wherein modifying the phrase comprises  
2   determining a canonical form of the phrase.
- 1           35.    The method of claim 23, wherein the matching further comprises  
2   retrieving an associated definition of the phrase.
- 1           36.    The method of claim 23, wherein presenting one or more  
2   definitions includes ranking the definitions.
- 1           37.    The method of claim 36, wherein the ranking is based at least in  
2   part on the documents.
- 1           38.    The method of claim 37, wherein the ranking is based at least in  
2   part on the PageRank of the documents associated with the definitions.
- 1           39.    The method of claim 23, wherein the presenting further includes  
2   processing the definitions.
- 1           40.    The method of claim 23, wherein presenting definitions for the  
2   phrase includes presenting a substantially most common capitalization of the  
3   phrase.

1           41.    The method of claim 40, further comprising presenting less  
2 common forms of the phrase.

1           42.    The method of claim 23, further comprising determining  
2 superstrings of the phrase present in the documents.

1           43.    The method of claim 42, further comprising presenting at least  
2 some of the determined superstrings.

1           44.    The method of claim 43, wherein at least one of the presented  
2 superstrings is presented as one of a related phrase and a suggested query.

1           45.    A computer-readable storage medium holding code for performing  
2 the method according to Claim 23.

1           46.    An apparatus for providing definitions, comprising:  
2        means for receiving a phrase to be defined;  
3        means for determining one or more documents each containing at least  
4 one definition;  
5        means for matching the phrase to at least one of the definitions; and  
6        means for presenting one or more definitions for the phrase.

1           47.    A system for determining definitions from distributed information  
2 stores, comprising:  
3        a search engine identifying one or more documents, which is each  
4 maintained in a distributed information store and contains a definition for an  
5 associated phrase, and storing information regarding each identified document;  
6 and  
7        a search front end matching a phrase for which a definition is sought  
8 against the stored information for each identified document, fetching each  
9 identified document from the distributed information store and returning one or  
10 more matching definitions, and presenting each matching definitions.

1           48.    A system according to Claim 47, further comprising:

2 a repository storing the information for a subset of the identified  
3 documents.

1 49. A system according to Claim 47, further comprising:  
2 a query engine conducting a query for the phrase for which a definition is  
3 sought, comprising at least one of searching for at least one of terms, phrases,  
4 variants, and canonicalizations indicating a presence of a definition, searching for  
5 text or fields within a document indicating a presence of a definition, and  
6 searching a structure of a document indicating a presence of a definition.

1 50. A system according to Claim 47, further comprising:  
2 a parser parsing the identified documents to identify occurrences of the  
3 phrase for which a definition is sought.

1 51. A system according to Claim 47, further comprising:  
2 a processor processing the matching definitions, comprising at least one  
3 of:  
4 a filter limiting the matching definitions to substantially matching  
5 definitions; and  
6 a definitions module providing at least one of a superstring,  
7 common variants, and common forms of the phrase for which a definition is  
8 sought.

1 52. A system according to Claim 47, wherein the matching definitions  
2 comprise at least one of matching terms and phrases, related terms and phrases,  
3 and random and eclectic terms and phrases.

1 53. A method for determining definitions from distributed information  
2 stores, comprising:  
3 identifying one or more documents, which is each maintained in a  
4 distributed information store and contains a definition for an associated phrase,  
5 and storing information regarding each identified document;

6 matching a phrase for which a definition is sought against the stored  
7 information for each identified document;  
8 fetching each identified document from the distributed information store  
9 and returning one or more matching definitions; and  
10 presenting each matching definitions.

1 54. A method according to Claim 53, further comprising:  
2 storing the information for a subset of the identified documents.

1 55. A method according to Claim 53, further comprising:  
2 conducting a query for the phrase for which a definition is sought,  
3 comprising at least one of:  
4 searching for at least one of terms, phrases, variants, and  
5 canonicalizations indicating a presence of a definition;  
6 searching for text or fields within a document indicating a presence  
7 of a definition; and  
8 searching a structure of a document indicating a presence of a  
9 definition.

1 56. A method according to Claim 53, further comprising:  
2 parsing the identified documents to identify occurrences of the phrase for  
3 which a definition is sought.

1 57. A method according to Claim 53, further comprising:  
2 processing the matching definitions, comprising at least one of:  
3 limiting the matching definitions to substantially matching  
4 definitions; and  
5 providing at least one of a superstring, common variants, and  
6 common forms of the phrase for which a definition is sought.

1 58. A method according to Claim 53, wherein the matching definitions  
2 comprise at least one of matching terms and phrases, related terms and phrases,  
3 and random and eclectic terms and phrases.

1           59.     A computer-readable storage medium holding code for performing  
2     the method according to Claim 53.

1           60.     An apparatus for determining definitions from distributed  
2     information stores, comprising:  
3           means for identifying one or more documents, which is each maintained in  
4     a distributed information store and contains a definition for an associated phrase,  
5     and means for storing information regarding each identified document;  
6           means for matching a phrase for which a definition is sought against the  
7     stored information for each identified document;  
8           means for fetching each identified document from the distributed  
9     information store and means for returning one or more matching definitions; and  
10          means for presenting each matching definitions.